

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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P 301038Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
SECSTATE WASHDC 8068

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: ASEC, AF, IR
SUBJ: AFHAN COUP

REF: KABUL 3320

1. MOST PRESS COMMENT IN FARSI LANGUAGE IS PLAYING THIS STORY CAREFULLY, ASKING QUESTIONS, BUT NOT TRYING TO PROVIDE ANSWERS AS TO ORIENTATION OF AFGHANISTAN'S NEW RULERS AND DIRECTION OF FOREIGN POLICY. EXAMPLE IS LONG ARTICLE IN KAYHAN APRIL 29 BY AMIR TAHERI, A JOURNALIST WHO HAS CLOSE TIES TO THE GOI. ALTHOUGH HEADLINES SPEAK OF "LEFTIST" COUP, HE CAREFULLY NOTES NEW GOVERNMENT'S CLAIM OF SPREADING DEMOCRACY AND ISLAM WITH NO CHANGES IN FOREIGN RELATIONS.

2. WE HAVE HEARD OF NOE VERY SMALL PAPER "PAYCHAM EMRUZ" WHICH CLAIMS TO HAVE PREDICTED THE COUP AND SAYS IT TOOK PLACE AS A PREVENTIVE MEASURE TO HEAD OFF A PRO-WESTERN COUP WHICH WAS BEING PREPARED BY DISSATISFIED AFGHANI
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INTELLECTUALS. WE ARE TRYING TO GET HOLD OF THIS ARTICLE, BUT IT IS IN A SMALL PAPER WITH LITTLE CIRCULATION.

3. MFA SPOKESMAN TELLS US GOI IS WITHHOLDING ANY COMMENT OR PRESS RELEASE AT LEAST UNTIL FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY RETURNS FROM HIS TRIP TO RABAT TOMORROW AND HAS A CHANCE TO ASSESS THE SITUATION. INCIDENTALLY, HE ALSO TELLS US

AFGHANISATN EMBASSY IS NOT REPT NOT ISSUING ANY VISAS TO
IRANIAN JOURNALISTS WHO WISH TO TRAVEL TO KABUL.

4. SINGLE EDITORIAL IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS OVER THE
WEEKEND IS SIMILARLY INCONCLUSIVE, THOUGH IT INTERESTINGLY
INTRODUCES THE THEM OF RISING INFLUENCE OF COMMUNIST
CHINA IN AFGHANISTAN BECAUSE OF ITS ASSISTANCE TO KABUL
IN AGRICULTURAL AND OTHER AREA.

5. PERHAPS MOST SUBSTANTIAL REACTION IS EDITORIAL IN
FRENCH LANGUAGE "JOURNAL DE TEHERAN" APRIL 29. CITING
POLITICAL OBSERVERS IN ISLAMABAD AND NEW DELHI, EDITORIAL
POINTS TO DIFFICULTY OF ORIENTATION OF NEW RULERS AS
THEY COULD BE "NATIONALIST RELIGIOUS OFFICERS" AS MUCH
AS "ADVERSARIES OF THE POLICIES OF NEUTRALITY FOLLOED
BY PRESIDENT MOHAMMAD DAOUD KHAN".

6. EDITORIAL NOTES THIS IS FIRST COUP D'ETAT SINCE
AFGHANISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE CAMPAIGN IN 1921 WHICH HAS NOT
HAD THE CHARACTER OF A "FAMILY AFFAIR" AND IT CONSTITUTES
AN END TO
THE TRADITIONAL AFGHAN ARISTOCRACY IN THE COUNTRY.
REVIEWING THE UPS AND DOWNS OF IRANIAN RELATIONS WITH
AFGHANISTAN AS EVIDENCE OF AFGHANISTAN'S CAREFUL
NEUTRALITY UP TO NOW, EDITORIAL HAS SOME CRITICAL REMARKS
ON COUPS D'ETAT IN GENERAL. IT SAYS EVENTS CONFIRM,
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ONCE AGAIN, THAT ASIAN AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES OF THE
THIRD WORLD ARE AT THE MERCY OF AMBITIOUS YOUNG (OR
NOT SO YOUNG OFFICERS) WHO CAN TAKE POWER WITH A
FEW PLANES AND TANKS. THE EXPERIENCE OF RECENT YEARS
SHOWS THAT ONCE COUPS D'ETAT BEGIN, THEY CONTINUE AND
CONTRIBUTE TO REDUCING WHAT LITTLE CONFIDENCE
ENLIGHTENED WORLD OPINIONS STILL HAS IN THE THIRD WORLD.
SULLIVAN

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